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Letter from the Editor
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Recently, Valparaiso University has adopted a more defined path to reflect its core values. As such, a new logo has been designed, the University has vocally embraced its rich Lutheran heritage, and the campus community has identified its most descriptive attributes. Those core values are “truth-seeking, free to inquire, humble, compassion, service-minded, purpose-driven, empowered, and ethical.” As a part of the University, these traits are integral to the programs of Valpo’s School of Business.

Thus, against the formal announcement of these guiding principles, business people and instructors must ask tough questions:

1. Are we manufacturing products and offering services in a sustainable way without plundering our natural resources?
2. Should the survival of the planet be the most critical feature in developing the business acumen of our students?
3. Is the accumulation of individual wealth generated from one’s business operations and investments contrary to our core values?
4. Is economic and social justice—as some would regard to be the basic cornerstones of one’s faith or raison d’être—attainable in a capitalistic society?
5. Must we divest ourselves of influences that adversely challenge or compromise these principles, even when the financial stakes put us at risk?

The articles and interviews presented in this issue would lead to an affirmative response to all queries. But let’s face it. “Walking the talk” is difficult, almost unattainable at times, but so important at a time when the business world is viewed with caustic cynicism and distrust – and often justly so in light of a toxic mixture of unfettered greed on Wall Street, stone-deaf corporate officials who either disregard or are purposefully ignorant of the long-term consequences of their operations, an oil spill which is continuing to threaten peoples’ livelihoods and the very existence of animal
species, and a plunge in home values and financing.

This issue concerns a rare, in-depth look into the business practices of one Amish district in Central Indiana. While business innovation, savvy, and dexterity certainly is demonstrated within this area without definite borders or county lines, the sense of community, respect for the environment, and commitment to God is demonstrated in all they do. Simplicity, divesture of excess wealth, and humility are the predominant attributes of these people.

Juxtaposed to this small community, two multi-national corporations are featured through one-on-one interviews: IBM and Whole Foods. IBM is demonstrating its break from its historically usual operations of manufacturing computer hardware and instead, is providing consulting services to business clients which encompass other businesses, different sectors of industry, cities, and even nations to help its clientele to troubleshoot and alleviate certain problems or crises. Whole Foods has also adopted a worldwide vision of providing products which are useful and respective of the environment and social forces. But companies such as these certainly have not forgotten the bottom line.

Lastly, this issue includes articles regarding different viewpoints on social responsibility and philanthropy in business operations, emanating from the United States, Indonesia, and India.

— Elizabeth Reiner Gingerich, J.D., Editor